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The Spectator

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Publishing the Truth, From Good Motives and For Justifiable Ends

Hamilton's Admissions Workers form a Union: how it all happened

by Duncan Freeman '22
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING EDITOR

On Sept. 23, Hamilton College's student tour guides and Senior Admission Fellows voted 25-20 in favor of unionizing. This vote formed the first-ever union representing college admissions office employees in the United States. The United Food and Commercial Workers International Union (UFCW), the union that students elected to join, announced the results of the vote on Tuesday, Oct. 12 after the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) completed the count.

"I'm ecstatic and very happy," said Eric Cortes-Kopp '22, a senior admissions fellow and member of the UFCW organizing committee. "It's been months of stress and worrying and at the end…we were still able to come out on top. It's big." In Mar. 2021, the NLRB repealed a Trump-era rule that prohibited undergraduate students from joining a union. This election is the first time that undergrads voted to unionize since this rule was repealed.

Monica Inzer, Vice President for Enrollment Management at Hamilton, responded to the outcome of the election, saying "I don't think a union is the right thing for our students…I trusted [students] to use common sense, but I think the emotion of it got to them and this was an emotional vote…students will vote with emotion instead of rational thinking. I thought the students would be more rational and that more of them would not vote for the union"

Hamilton College released an official statement after the announcement of the election results. It reads: "The National Labor Relations Board has counted the ballots and a majority of those Admission student workers who voted selected union representation. Hamilton supports the right of workers to choose what they believe is best for them. We recognize that there were strong opinions on both sides of this issue, and we encourage everyone to work together as we move forward. As always, Hamilton greatly appreciates all of the hard work and dedication that our student employees bring to the jobs they perform while pursuing their academic careers."

"I trusted [students] to use common sense, but I think the emotion of it got to them and this was an emotional vote…students will vote with emotion instead of rational thinking." - Monica Inzer

Inzer told *The Spectator* she was "surprised [the vote] was close" because she predicted that students would vote overwhelmingly against the union. But Inzer "can't even be mad" because "in many ways, they're victims of a union...The union kind of targeted our students and saw this as an 'in' on-campus and I feel bad for the students, even the ones who voted for it because I don't think it's in their best interest."

The union election occurred in the first-floor conference room of the Sadove Student Center. 80% of Hamilton student admissions workers were present at the polls. The NLRB delayed ballot counting until this past Tuesday because two students who are currently on the D.C program voted by mail.

PHOTO COURTESY OF ROCLABORFED

Samantha DeRiso, President of Central New York Labor Council, said she felt "super excited for the students that are making history." DeRiso advised the admissions workers throughout the unionization process. She noted that from the beginning, "the students really knew what they wanted, and they were not afraid to say it."

Max Steffey '22, who started working as a tour guide in Spring 2019 and gave tours during Summer 2021, voted against the union. When Steffey initially heard that students were organizing, he was "proud of Hamilton students for demanding more of administration because I was generally aware that a lot of admissions workers had some problems with their treatment."

However, Steffey eventually voted against the union "because I thought that it seemed particularly performative and unnecessary." Now that the union has been voted in, Steffey "remains indifferent to the passing of the union, as I'm sure that it won't affect the way my job functions...like many other tour guides, I'm not working this job for any financial reasons… I'm also doubtful of how efficient this process will be, because I'm sure that negotiating terms is going to take a while."

Izzy Rutkey '22, a tour guide and member of the union's organizing committee who voted for the union said she "was so happy to learn that the union vote passed and that the majority of student admissions workers voted to give more power to our voices within the admissions office." Rutkey hopes that the union "will allow [workers] to create a working environment [that reflects] the admissions office's assertion that tour guides and senior fellows are the most sought after and prestigious positions on campus."

The unionization process began in earnest after Dean of Admissions Peaches Valdes rejected a request submitted by summer tour guides for an 83¢ pay raise in early July 2021. After this rejection, summer admissions workers connected with Cortes-Kopp who helped summer tour guides begin the process of joining the UFCW and connected students with DeRiso. One of the summer tour guides, Lori Fejes '22, was fired from his incoming position as a Senior Admissions Fellow less than a month after requesting the pay raise.

Discussions between admissions workers about unionizing began as early as Fall 2020 and continued into Spring 2021. However, it came to a climax in Summer 2021. What follows is a nine-month timeline that identifies the events leading up to the union vote and examines the concerns of students working in the admissions office through an unprecedented, pandemic-stricken 2020-2021 academic year, and a severely understaffed Summer. Before jumping into the timeline, below is a description of Hamilton's student worker wage structure, and an explanation of how the wage structure in practice influenced the 83¢ pay raise request and subsequent unionization efforts.

Hamilton's Student Worker Pay Scale

Hamilton's pay scale for student workers operates in a three-tiered system. The first and lowest tier is for "positions that require individuals to be dependable and attentive…and positions that require some skill with training normally provided by the department and specific attention to detail." "Positions that require the ability to clearly communicate specific academic or technical knowledge and understanding to others," are situated within the intermediate bracket. The highest bracket is reserved for "positions that require advanced academic

or technical knowledge and understanding of processes to the extent needed to assess and critically evaluate others' work and/or the supervision and training of others."

Director of Human Resources Stephen Stemkoski said that it has "been our approach to use minimum wage to set the minimum threshold," for Hamilton's wage scale. The current minimum wage in New York State (outside of New York City, Long Island and Westchester County) is $12.50. The minimum wage has been increasing every year since 2016. At Hamilton College, an institution with an endowment of over one billion dollars, students working in Fall 2021 can be paid at most $13.75 per hour, which is $1.25 more than minimum wage.

Inzer said "we try to keep," tour guides in the intermediate tier and Senior Admission Fellows in the top tier. However, in Fall 2021, tour guides are being paid $12.75, which falls within the lowest pay range of $12.50 to $12.91. Senior Admission Fellows are being paid $13.00, which falls within the intermediate range of $12.92 to $13.33. The top pay range in Fall 2021 is $13.34 to $13.75.

Summer pay ranges are always wider and higher-paying than the academic year's pay range. During the summer, the pay range increases to $2.75, meaning that the ceiling for a Hamilton student working an on-campus job during Summer 2021 was $15.25. The three pay ranges in Summer 2021 were $12.50 to $13.41, $13.42 to $14.33 and $14.34 to $15.25. During Summer 2021, Hamilton's admissions office paid tour guides $13.50 an hour, placing them near the middle of the Hamilton pay scale.

According to Stemkoski, student workers are spread evenly throughout the three payment tiers. Stemkoski said he was not sure how unionization of admissions workers would affect how Hamilton implements its pay scale, though he said he hopes to keep "things equitable for hourly-paid staff between those unionized and not."

Through the union, admissions workers can now petition for a pay raise, as well as other concessions, as part of their union's first contract negotiations that are set to occur over the course of the next several months.

Signs of Discontent

In Fall 2021, the admissions office offered solely virtual events, including Continental Chats and Major Meetups. According to Cortes-Kopp, since there were no tours, tour guides were either not working or worked "one hour, one admissions event per month." At the time, Cortes-Kopp served as one of two Tour Guide Coordinators. Tour guides also attended virtual one-hour meetings once a month, which were paid.

At the beginning of Nov. 2020, the admissions office introduced "Tours from Your Sofa." Student tour guides walked around the College with a selfie stick attached to an iPhone that was connected to Zoom. The objective of "Tours from Your Sofa" was to provide a virtual tour of campus to prospective students, as the College's COVID-19 regulations during the Fall 2020 semester prohibited visitors to Hamilton. According to Inzer and Cortes-Kopp, this program ran from Nov. 2 to 20 as a "trial run" that was reserved for 5 veteran tour guides.

As one of two students in charge of scheduling "Tours from Your Sofa," Cortes-Kopp felt that "there was a lot of frustration with trying to schedule [tour guides]," because only a few tour guides—including Kopp—could participate in virtual tours. This small group of guides gave six to seven tours a week, while tour guides outside of the veteran group led none. This contrasts with semesters before the COVID-19 pandemic, during which tour guides usually gave around three to four tours a week. Inzer said that "some students didn't get as many hours as they would in 'normal' times, but others might have gotten more hours than typical."

According to Cortes-Kopp, it was at this time when workers began "whispering" about needing a union in an "unofficial matter." These whispers focused on the disparity in hours and seeming lack of control that tour guides had over who would give what tours.

The full rollout of "Tours from Your Sofa" occurred at the beginning of the Spring 2021 semester. This rollout included equitable participation from all campus tour guides. "The balance was better because we were scheduling it for everyone," said Cortes-Kopp, who still served as a Tour Guide Coordinator during Spring 2020.

The Return to In-Person Tours

By Feb. 10, Hamilton College moved into the Blue operating status after several weeks of low case numbers. This change meant that students could now visit each other's residence halls. Inzer said that the admissions office desperately wanted to offer in-person tours to the accepted students of the Class of 2025 because a vast majority of these students had never set foot on Hamilton's campus. In early Feb., the admissions office submitted a plan to the COVID-19 Task Force for in-person tours.

Simultaneously, the office reached out to student tour guides about in-person tours. On Feb. 22, Alexa Ray, an Assistant Dean of Admissions at the time, sent an email to Hamilton's student tour guides notifying them that during the week of Mar. 22, the admissions office was planning to "safely resume in-person tours in a modified, appropriately spaced and selective format." The email asked guides to fill out a form if they wanted to lead in-person tours. It also requested that those who did not wish to participate should notify the admissions office.

Ray's email received such a harsh and immediate response from tour guides that only two hours later, she sent out a follow-up apology email to the tour guides. In this email, she clarified that in-person tours would not be returning for another month, and only if the College moved into Green operating status. Ray noted in the email that Colgate was currently offering in-person tours, and that prospective students and their parents were already coming to Hamilton's campus and taking self-guided tours since "there is nothing that stops them from arriving on campus and walking around." Ray also clarified in this email that those who did not want to give in-person tours could elect to solely lead "Tours from Your Sofa".

On Mar. 1, Student Assembly wrote to the COVID-19 Task Force protesting the proposed return of in-person tours. They stated in their email that "we have seen a massive outpouring of frustration, anger, and fear on this issue from the student body both on social media and to us as student government representatives…our primary concern stems from the imminent threat posed by resuming in-person tours, and the threat that this will cause to student employees in Admissions, in particular low-income students of color."

Despite the backlash from the initial email, Inzer noted that "almost everybody said they were comfortable giving in-person tours." According to Inzer, "nobody complained at the time" within the admissions office.

Hamilton moved to Green operating status on Mar. 8, 2021, and for the first time since Mar. 2020, Hamilton allowed students to leave campus to travel to Clinton and New Hartford on a limited basis. The College also allowed students' parents to visit campus as long as they remained outside the whole time. On Mar. 22, 2021, in-person tours returned to Hamilton's campus for the first time since Aug. 2020. At first, tours were self-guided, but within a week, student tour guides returned to their backwards-walking ways, sauntering around campus with accepted students and their families.

Irene Park '23 started as a tour guide in Jan. 2021 by leading "Tours from Your Sofa." However, she began to give in-person tours in late March 2021. Park said in-person tours made her nervous because "you never know where these students are coming from." She had "experiences where families wouldn't keep their mask on, or it would come down or they would come too close." Park felt that "if we're having COVID-19 cases on campus I don't think it's a good idea to have more people on campus right now." Regardless, she continued leading tours because she knew how important tours were to a prospective student's decision, as Park herself "came to Hamilton because my tour was really nice."

Cortes-Kopp's view was that "we're putting ourselves at risk to make Hamilton look good," by giving in-person tours. He was offended that "the school offered no hazard pay to do these tours," which he felt tour guides deserved due to the ongoing pandemic.

Cortes-Kopp said that both the disparity in hours in Fall 2020 and concerns about returning to in-person tours in Spring 2021 "added to the fire" of unionization. This fire grew biggest over the summer when tour guides worked full time for an admissions office that was understaffed.

Summer "Volunteers" and Gift Cards

PHOTO COURTESY OF WRILEY NELSON '22

One of the gift cards given to one of the tour guide workers.

Each summer, Hamilton's admissions office hires six to eight full-time tour guides. For the entire summer, each student works between 30 and 35 hours a week giving tours to prospective students. In Summer 2021, there was only one full-time tour guide who worked the entire summer. Two other students worked full-time for about two-thirds of the summer. The rest of the tours were covered by a rotating cast of students who lived on campus for a few weeks at a time and periodically covered shifts in the admissions office. The admissions office also employed, at different times, three students who were living on campus and working full-time as research assistants for professors.

Two of these students, Cherry Zhang '22 and Yassine Dhouib '24, gave tours on a volunteer basis for no pay. After their tours, these students received gift cards to Hannaford or other retailers, along with a thank you note from someone in the admissions office as a "thank you for volunteering their time," according to Dean Valdes. Inzer said that "It was never a deal made in advance...they were never told 'you're going to get

a gift card'…it was a strict policy of [students] volunteering and then later getting gift cards as a thank you."

Dhouib said he feels "no ill-will towards the admissions office." After initially leading some Saturday summer tours on a volunteer basis Dhouib worked as a full-time tour guide and received full compensation during the second half of the summer. Dhouib said that he was touched when management checked in with him when he was sick over the summer and he enjoyed the excursions they went on as a team.

Cherry Zhang declined to comment for this article. She is currently a Senior Fellow in the admissions office, and Dean Valdes told *The Spectator* that Zhang received gift cards after volunteering to do tours while working as a research assistant over the summer.

A third student, Sami Brown '22, volunteered to give two tours during the summer outside of the time she was doing her biology research. Brown said that her supervisors never told her before giving her tour "if I would be paid or not paid. They just said, 'can you come to help out with a tour at this time?'"

After her first tour on July 15, Brown got an email from Cam Segal, an Assistant Dean of Admissions, saying that she could pick up a $10 Utica Coffee gift card at the desk in the admissions office. Brown understood this to be her payment for the hour-long tour she gave, which was below the $13.50/hour rate that full-time tour guides made in Summer 2021. Dean Valdes responded over email "I would assume that she submitted hours to get paid. Over the years, our office has given coffee cards to people who have gone above and beyond as a thank you."

After her second and last tour on July 24, Brown was able to log her hours normally and get paid on the tour guide payroll. This was after Segal gave Brown the option of again receiving a gift card, according to Brown.

Segal told *The Spectator* via email that he was not comfortable discussing "specifics regarding individual and personnel matters." He continued in the email that "however, I can tell you this, I love my job. I love Hamilton and I care a tremendous amount about supporting our tour guides (including the 30 new ones we just hired). My goal (and that of my co-lead and colleagues) always has been and always will be to continue to make this program a positive, educational and rewarding experience for them and for us."

Wriley Nelson '22 also gave tours during Summer 2021 while living for the whole summer at home in Cooperstown, New York, which is an hour away from the College. Like Dhouib, Brown and Zhang, Nelson answered the admissions office's call for workers and drove to school three different times to give tours to prospective students. Nelson received payment for these tours, but decided to stop doing them after his request to be reimbursed for travel costs was denied by Dean of Admissions Peaches Valdes. According to Inzer, Valdes and Director of Human Resources Steve Stemkoski, it is against school policy to reimburse student workers for travel costs. Nelson did not know this policy when he was driving from home to give tours over the summer.

Valdes said she initially did not know that Nelson was commuting to give tours. However, once she learned of this information and that Nelson ceased giving tours, she mailed him a $25 Visa gift card with a thank you note. "It was a thank you for volunteering," said Dean Valdes before Inzer reaffirmed that admissions "never want to short students… we want to pay students the most competitive wages we can." Nelson still has not used this gift card.

The Request for a Raise

Fejes, Nicholas Kern '24 and a third student (who wishes to remain anonymous) were the three tour guides who worked full time in the admissions office for the majority of Summer 2021. For Kern, his position over Summer 2021 marked his first time working for the admissions office. The other two students both started working for the admissions office in 2019.

Going into the summer, Fejes was concerned that "there was no system in place to check who was vaccinated and who wasn't," for the visiting families, and that "it was just based on the honor system." Like current students, prospective students and their families were no longer required to wear masks outside if they were vaccinated starting Summer 2021. However, families were not required to show COVID-19 vaccination cards, while Hamilton students were required to be vaccinated and show proof of vaccination in order to return to campus in Fall 2021 (unless they submitted a petition that was approved by the College). Like Cortes-Kopp, Fejes felt that students should be receiving hazard pay or wage increases as a result of giving in-person tours during the pandemic.

"It sucks that when students try and voice their opinion, that a lot of the administration's go-to strategy is to shut them down...because we have more workers, we're gonna fire you and go find someone else." - Irene Park '23

Early on in the summer, Fejes began to have conversations with other summer tour guides about their wages and contract with the school, hoping to learn more about why their pay was $13.50 an hour.

Some summer tour guides felt that it was unfair that they were only in the second bracket. "There's a whole advanced knowledge bracket that we felt we should be a part of," said Kern. "I thought it was strange that I could go down the Hill and work at McDonald's or Dunkin' Donuts and make more than I would as a tour guide," said Fejes.

Park, who gave tours during Summer 2021, said admissions workers deserved to be in the highest bracket because they "have to memorize any possible question that any prospective student could have." She also thought that admission workers deserve higher wages because "you're bringing these families around the school…you have to be able to handle situations with certain individuals who can be difficult…you have to pass a certification test to even begin giving tours."

The Tour Guide Handbook is 31 pages long with instructions about what guides should talk about, facts about every area of study and details about how students should dress and present themselves. Every tour guide has to sign a confidentiality agreement because they often handle sensitive admissions data, as well as a service excellence pledge that further details how to interact with visitors.

Park worked as an archivist in the library for most of the day over the summer and agreed to start doing tours each day starting in late June because the office was understaffed. Park specifically avoided working full time in the admissions office in Summer 2021 because she knew that "doing three tours a day is really draining…you're stuck in the admissions office and it gets very repetitive and mentally tiring all the time"

Park said she had friends in other jobs on campus for the same hours "who were making a lot more money than we were, [and they were just] sitting at a desk looking at their phones."

These concerns pushed Fejes, Kern and the third anonymous student to ask their supervisors for a raise during their weekly tour guide meeting on Thursday, July 8. Fejes said that student workers wanted to be moved to the highest bracket, or, if that was denied, to have their wages raised to $14.33, which would be the very top of the intermediate payment tier. Dean Valdes did not usually attend these meetings, but when Fejes informed her before the meeting via email that the student workers would be asking for an 83¢ raise, she informed Fejes that she would be in attendance.

The student workers also decided before the meeting that if their request for a raise was denied, they would strike the coming Saturday, July 10. This date marked the first Saturday of Summer 2021 that the admissions office was open. Fejes said he realized that "we were, at that point in the summer, carrying the operation, we were giving tours and we were doing office duties when we weren't giving tours." He and the other tour guides felt that "we could sort of upset that environment or change that environment if we walk in one day and say we're not going to give tours." Fejes explained that the strike "was a conditional idea." "If we get the pay raise, we don't go on strike, if we don't get the pay raise, we go on strike."

Kern described the July 8 meeting with himself, Fejes, the anonymous third worker, Dean Valdes and two Assistant Deans as "a one-sided conversation…where we were telling all these grievances and they weren't giving any leeway."

The tour guides alleged that when the students asked why tour guides only qualified for the intermediate payment tier, Dean Valdes told them that the only jobs that made it into the top tier over the summer were research jobs with professors, and that tour guides would not be moving into that tier. Fejes then asked about the 83¢ raise, from $13.50 to $14.33 which Dean Valdes also denied. Dean Valdes said that she told the students "the wages are set prior to the summer, so we are not going to be raising wages at this time." Dean Valdes said further that she assumed only Fejes was asking for a pay raise because "the other individuals in the room didn't look at me," and because Fejes did a vast majority of the talking. Inzer told *The Spectator,* "we thought we were paying competitively…we pay well above minimum wage and you had one individual who asked for a raise." She continued, saying "that would be disruptive around campus…there would be disruption if everyone was giving raises on the fly all the time."

Stemkoski told *The Spectator* that individual departments, like the admissions office, are allowed to set their wages however they like, as long as wages remain within the pay scale guidelines. Managers can have open discussions with their workers about what they would like their wages to be and change those wages without getting approval from Human Resources.

Kern and the third anonymous worker are adamant that Fejes's request for a raise was their request as well. Additionally, the three students spoke to other tour guides before the meeting, and both Nelson and Park told *The Spectator* that they told the three students that they too wanted a raise.

The students left the meeting disappointed and were prepared to strike two days later on Saturday, July 10. However, admissions workers cancelled the strike after Fejes reached out to Eric Santamauro-Stenzel '24, who was the incoming Vice President of Student Assembly at the time, and told him the outcome of the meeting and that they were planning a strike. Santomauro-Stenzel advised Fejes to call off the strike because "strikes are incredibly

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The Spectator is resuming its advertisement page for the first time since Spring 2020. If you are interested in running an ad, please contact Advertising Manager Mukund Jayaram '22 at specads@hamilton.edu.

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Feel free to look at previous "Advertisement" pages from the past few weeks, or ask Mukund for any recommendations!

Best, Emma Mae and Cole

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Letters to the Editor are welcome from all students, alumni/ae, faculty, friends of the college, and Hamilton community members.

The Spectator has the following policies for submission:

1. Submissions are due by 10:00 p.m. on the Monday before publication. The editors reserve the right to refuse any late submissions.
2. Letters should be no longer than 500 words. The editors reserve the right to cut off letters at 500 words.
3. Letters submitted anonymously will not be printed.
4. *The Spectator* reserves the right not to publish any letter it deems inappropriate for publication.
5. If a piece is determined to be libelous, an unwarranted invasion of privacy, or an unnecessary and/or unwarranted ad hominem or personal attack, it will not be published.

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the time, and told him the outcome of the meeting and that they were planning a strike. Santomauro-Stenzel advised Fejes to call off the strike because "strikes are incredibly dangerous to do without a union protecting you." Santomauro-Stenzel told Fejes that "if the tour guides went on strike, the College would basically fire you at will."

Instead, Santomauro-Stenzel connected Fejes with Cortes-Kopp, who was doing on-campus research at the time and was set to become a Senior Admissions Fellow in Fall 2021. Santomauro-Stenzel understood that Cortes-Kopp knew a lot about labor organizing because Cortes-Kopp had been interning at the Central New York Labor Council under DeRiso since Feb. 2020.

Fejes and the other summer tour guides listened to Santamauro-Stenzel and called off the strike with promises to begin the unionization process with Cortes-Kopp's help. The week after the July 8 meeting, Cortes-Kopp hosted the first of what would become weekly organizing meetings for the union at Babbitt Pavilion. Kern, Fejes, the anonymous guide and several other tour guides attended this first meeting. Several signed union authorization cards, which is the first official step for creating a union.

Firing A "Disgruntled Employee"

A few weeks after the July 8 meeting, Fejes resigned from his position as a summer tour guide. However, Fejes still expected to work as a senior fellow in the admissions office in Fall 2021 and Spring 2022, a position he had applied for and been accepted to in Spring 2021. On Aug. 5, however, Dean Valdes called Fejes into a meeting at the admissions office.

In this meeting, Dean Valdes told Fejes that he would no longer be needed as a senior admissions fellow for the upcoming year. In response to questions about Fejes' firing Monica Inzer told *The Spectator* "we're not gonna talk about personnel issues, performance issues, disciplinary issues. It's just not appropriate." Inzer felt that "If there's a disgruntled employee who doesn't wanna work here they can quit...it's a surprise to us if other students felt that way because we didn't hear that."

Fejes said that in the meeting, Dean Valdes told him he was being fired because, among other reasons, Fejes had been dissatisfied with how the admissions office was run, and that there had been times where Fejes questioned the decisions of this office. Both Kern and Fejes think that Fejes was fired because he led the July 8 request for a raise and because of his subsequent involvement with the unionization campaign. However, at the time that Fejes was fired, Dean Valdes and Inzer were completely unaware of the unionization talks that had been happening for three weeks.

Park was concerned and surprised when she heard that Fejes was fired. She said, "it sucks that when students try and voice their opinion, that a lot of the administration's go-to strategy is to shut them down...because we have more workers, we're gonna fire you and go find someone else."

According to Cortes-Kopp, admissions workers will now receive anonymous surveys that workers will fill out in order to detail what concessions they hope to win in negotiations with their employer. Admissions workers will also choose among themselves via secret ballot who among them will speak for the workers at the negotiating table.

Connor McManus '23, who voted against the union, said "the biggest thing moving forward will be electing the correct representatives to do what is best for the group. I think it is evident that the majority of student workers agree changes need to be made in the admissions work environment. Now, our focus should shift towards resolving those issues."

Rutkey said she hopes that "this is just the beginning for student workers at Hamilton coming together to say that they deserve to have their voices heard and respected and to be treated fairly in the workplace. Our union made history." As a result, Rutkey is "looking forward to seeing a fundamental shift in how Hamilton values and treats its student workers."

To read the full story, visit spec.hamilton.edu

Sophomores partake in fall break trips

by Nicholas Cackett '24
STAFF WRITER

This fall break, students from the Class of 2024 were given the unique opportunity of attending an Adirondack Adventure (AA) orientation-style trip as sophomores. Orientation trips are typically meant for first-year and transfer students to help them transition to college life while making new friends and gaining new experiences. However, due to circumstances around COVID-19, students from the Class of 2024 were unable to participate in a conventional orientation, as all AA trips were cancelled. Instead, orientation for last year's first-year students was adapted to be held entirely on campus. Sarah Jillings, the Assistant Director of outdoor leadership, attested that "what we're trying to do this year is make up for those experiences."

This year, Hamilton's professional outdoor leadership staff, including sophomore trip student coordinators Shelby McVey '22, Margaret McDow '23 and Lena Schneck '23, provided the class of 2024 the opportunity to go on an AA trip and partake in a similar experience to the one they missed. Basil Brown '24 expressed "when the Adirondack Adventure makeup trips for sophomores got announced, it was the best surprise I could have gotten." Sarah Jillings told Hamilton News and Events that the trips were met with an eager response, with 40 members of the sophomore class signing up and enrolling in trips.

This year's sophomore trips were shorter than the typical first-year orientation trips, lasting two nights and three days, beginning on Fri., Oct. 15 and ending on Sun., Oct. 17. Participants began preparing on Thurs., Oct. 14 with their new groups, getting their dry bags ready and making sure they had all the necessary gear gathered for the weekend excursions ahead. Groups were led by AA orientation leaders, and their efforts were spearheaded by Andrew Jillings, Director of Outdoor Leadership, who volunteered as well to help with the trips. These student orientation leaders, ten of whom were upperclassmen, dedicated themselves to ensure trips ran smoothly and provided a safe and fun environment in which everyone could enjoy themselves.

Each AA trip held a different intensity level and offered varying activity within the Adirondacks, allowing students to pick what they preferred. Students had a variety of choices in trips, such as hiking, canoeing and sea kayaking, regardless of experience level. Trips also had a variety of destinations, which included the Ausable Club area, Raquette Lake and Blue Mountain Lake, Long Lake, the Giant Mountain Area and Stillwater Reservoir. Each provided a unique experience for the groups camping there, as they worked with each other to set up tents, collect water and prepare food for three days.

Students were given the opportunity to explore and enjoy the outdoors while growing closer to their classmates. Conditions were not perfect with rainy weather persisting throughout the weekend, but as Sarah Jillings articulated, "The worst conditions make for the best adventures…they have this really cohesive way of bringing a group together." When the orientation trips concluded, students returned to campus and de-issued any gear they borrowed from the Glen House for their trips. Afterwards, everyone who participated or helped coordinate the trips gathered for a banquet dinner together to celebrate an accomplished three days in the woods.

The sophomore orientation trips provided a successful bonding experience for students. Many made new connections with their peers that will continue during their years at Hamilton and beyond.

PHOTO COURTESY OF KATHLEEN DEEDY '24

Family Weekend returns to the Hill

by Anna Richardson '25
NEWS CONTRIBUTOR

During the weekend of Oct. 9, families and friends from near and far filled Hamilton's campus, ready to spend time with loved ones and get a taste of life on College Hill.

Typically an annual tradition, this year's Family Weekend was the first since Fall 2019 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.The College was ready to greet the over 2,000 guests with Clinton Cider Mill donuts, Utica's famous half-moon cookies and bags of Utica Coffee.

Students were also excited to see their families and watch them sample what the College and Clinton have to offer. Despite being an upperclassman, Liza Greene '23 was on campus for Family Weekend for the first time in her academic career. "[Family Weekend] was awesome," Greene said. "It was actually my first time being here for a family weekend because [Women's Cross Country] usually has an away race, but we were home and we won, so it was so fun to have the families there."

Greene and her family thoroughly enjoyed eating plenty of apple cider donuts. "We got cider donuts on campus, and then we also went down to the Clinton Cider Mill so that [my family]could see it and eat fresh donuts." She added, "my parents are big into the Cider Mill."

Beyond treating the guests to the local favorites, the College also offered choir, band and dance performances, President Wippman's State of the College address, a Saranac Brewing Company tasting and numerous on-campus sporting events.

Madeline Petro '25 and her family took advantage of the great weather, enjoying activities both on- and off-campus. "I showed my family around the campus and Clinton's downtown. We spend a lot of time outside enjoying the beautiful weather and foliage," Petro noted.

Petro and her family also went to the pumpkin carving event hosted by First-Year Experience and the Pondapalooza concert. The pumpkin carving event was especially fun for the group as "I love pumpkins," Petro said. "I was delighted that there was still a way for me to carve a jack-o-lantern this fall."

Petro felt that it was important for her family to see campus in person, especially since they were not able to visit before she applied. "Applying to college during the pandemic meant that my family did not know much about Hamilton," she said. "Feeling the environment for themselves and seeing the student body helped them get a better idea of life at Hamilton."

On the parent side of the weekend, Chrystal Wittcopp, P '25, made the most of the weekend by going to numerous events offered by the College. "We went to the art show, saw science posters, listened to the presidential lecture, ate at the family lunch, participated in the oak stomp and watched the cross country meet and football game," Wittcopp said.

While all these events gave Wittcopp a better feel for life on the Hill, she remained eager still for more hands-on experiences with student life. "I really wished [my husband and I] had been able to go to a class. Maybe even go to a college party," she said jokingly.

While COVID-19 restrictions did prevent parents from entering the classrooms, it is clear that both students and parents enjoyed the sunny weather and time together on-campus.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

Brendan Wiseman '23 shares an adorable moment with his mother.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

Students display an intriguing science experiment for gathered guests.

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

Students welcome friends and family from home to campus.

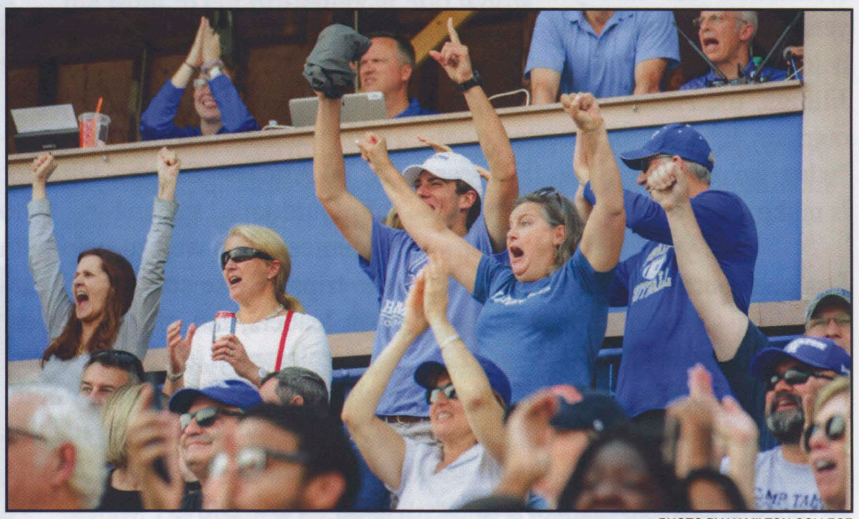

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

An enthusiastic crowd cheers on the football team at a home game.

Nancy Thompson steps in as Interim Dean

by Deanna Durben '25
STAFF WRITER

After Vice President and Dean of Students Terry Martinez went on medical leave beginning Oct. 11, former Dean of Students Nancy Thompson stepped in to serve as Interim Dean in Martinez's absence.

However, Thompson is no stranger to the College, having worked in the Dean of Students office in various roles for 31 years before her retirement in 2017. During that time, Thompson served as Dean of Students for 14 years. In this position, she oversaw multicultural affairs, career services, Campus Safety, chaplains, counseling and psychological services, study abroad, Residential Life, Student Activities, student health services and the Outdoor Adventure program. She was beloved by both students and staff, winning their respect and admiration.

Throughout Hamilton's handlings of COVID-19 last year, Thompson followed the College's progress from afar—or not so far, as she lives right down the Hill. According to Thompson, she passed through campus three days a week and never saw a student without a mask. "I was so proud of this community for the great work they did to keep everyone safe," she said. Thompson had not anticipated returning, but she is glad to offer her help and expertise.

Since Thompson last worked at Hamilton, there have been many improvements in the division of student life that she is really excited about. She has found the additional staff and programming in the Counseling Center to be really beneficial, and that the new ALEX program is fantastic because of its potential to help students feel connected to all of Hamilton's resources from the beginning.

Thompson is excited to reconnect with old colleagues and meet new ones. "It's good to be back," she said.

Over the course of her impressive previous tenure, Dean Thompson was known for her ability to connect with students on an individual level. Right before her retirement in June 2017, Hamilton's Alumni Association presented her with the 2017 Distinguished Service Award, which recognizes an employee who has substantially contributed to Hamilton through their distinguished job performance and involvement in student, alumni or other activities in the College community.

The citation included effusive praise from both colleagues and students. "When someone at the pinnacle of her career takes you seriously, you remember her," two members of the Class of 2007 wrote, "She had faith in us." She acted as "the fair and rational voice of the College," helping students who made mistakes face consequences and redeem themselves, as well as talking to students and parents about difficult topics in ways that they could appreciate and understand.

Thompson has cultivated a reputation on campus for her ability to seek out opportunities to interact and hear about students' experiences. From striking up conversations while eating lunch in a dining hall to communicating with various student organizations, she always tries to find out what students need and what parts of their experience at Hamilton they are enjoying.

Dean Thompson has long expressed her belief that students have great ideas and the best understanding of what could make their lives better. According to Thompson, while the administration cannot change everything students would like, and some goals require gradual progress, she believes that the College cannot begin to improve unless students communicate their needs and wants. As she expressed in an all-campus email on Oct. 17, Dean Thompson welcomes any chance to meet with students to discuss their concerns.

The Division of Student Life works with everything from Residential Life to student publications, so Dean Thompson continuously touched base with students during her time in office. An important aspect of how she connected with students was always working closely with the Student Assembly (SA). Thompson articulated that SA offers the most direct channel to hear student opinions, stating, "I feel like the Student Assembly can be a really important voice for the student body and advocate for things that will benefit the students at Hamilton." She further noted, "working with the SA is a very powerful way to get student needs met." Thompson is hoping to forge a close relationship with the current assembly.

Dean Thompson is unsure how long she will hold her new position, but noted that she will try her best to form strong connections and build rapport with the student body to ensure student voices are heard. "I'm happy to help make sure Dean Martinez's vision keeps moving forwards," she said, and hopes that she will do well.

As Thompson stated, "I have always been, and will continue to be, committed to trying to make sure that every single student at Hamilton has the best experience they can have, and that this is a place where they feel they belong, and where they can thrive, and be challenged and meet those challenges, and feel strengthened by their experiences."

Whether you have concerns, suggestions or want to share "what's good" at Hamilton, Dean Thompson would like to hear about it: "My door is open, so just reach out to Cindy [Reynolds] and get on my calendar."

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE TUFTS DAILY

Nancy Thompson returns from Tufts University to Hamilton College to serve as the Interim Dean.

Hamilton Horoscopes

by Mariam Saied '23
Resident Astrologist

Mercury is finally out of its three week long retrograde, so rejoice and enjoy reading what the stars have in store for you...

Jan. 20-Feb. 18: Aquarius
February 19-March 20: Pisces
March 21-April 19: Aries
April 20-May 20: Taurus
May 21-June 20: Gemini
June 21-July 22: Cancer
July 23-August 22: Leo
August 23-Sept. 22: Virgo
Sept. 23-Oct. 22: Libra
Oct.23-Nov. 21: Scorpio
Nov. 22-Dec. 21: Sagittarius
Dec. 22-Jan. 19: Capricorn

Aries
Remember Aries, you should be seeking out love, not an enemy in relationships. You may have fought some battles these past few weeks, but Mercury is finally direct so it is about that time that you extend an olive branch and reach some sort of agreement. With the full moon in your sign, this is the perfect time to take any rage or competitive energy and channel it into self-improvement. Go dance under the moonlight; have a full on coming of age movie moment.

Taurus
One thing about Taureans, they always know what they want. Now that Mercury is direct, your efforts to reorganize your life will be very successful. With your environment finally meeting the expectations you set in your head, you can finally start to worry about what you want internally. The full moon in Aries encourages you to contemplate the ways in which you have induced internal change and the ways change has snuck up on you instead. Take action when you need to, but leave space for life to happen.

Gemini
All cosmic signs are pointing to you having a wonderful week. The only potential obstacle is yourself. As a Mercury ruled sign, you are known for your intellect. If the work you're doing is intellectually stimulating, you have the tendency to let it consume you. Make time for breaks! With Mercury traveling in your pleasure zone and the moon in your social zone, spend time with the people you love and do things that bring you joy. Everyone has a productivity cap, so breaks will help you recharge! Let go of unnecessary guilt.

Cancer
If you had your eyes on a certain promotion or new career opportunity, now is the time to go for it! You may tend to keep a lot to yourself, and due to this, people may underestimate you. When you are kind, people may assume you're easily manipulated. When you are calm, they assume you have no backbone or lack passion. This is far from the truth, and now is the time to debunk those myths. Stand up for yourself, refuse to be easily disregarded and go after what you want! Bring out the pincers!

Leo
Jupiter is stationing direct this week. Up until now, your understanding of how you relate to the world around you may have been foggy. Expect this fog to clear. Give yourself time to process what comes into view and do not rush to action. Growing pains are expected as you enter this journey of self-discovery and gain more confidence in your place in this world.

Virgo
Value and nourish yourself, but do not do so in isolation! It is all too easy for you to not take your loneliness seriously. You convince yourself that you have bigger problems to deal with, and while this may be true, your emotions still matter. This Aries full moon could be a good time for you to self-reflect and get rid of things in your life that you don't need. The emptiness that remains should not stay empty! Why is it that the only time you don't put in work is when your own happiness is on the table?

Libra
Libra season is ending this week, soak in these last few days. You might find yourself wanting to curl up in a ball under a weighted blanket while blasting some Mitski; go ahead and do that. People have been asking a lot of you lately and it gets overwhelming. Listen to yourself and embrace the Scorpio energy that is to come.

Scorpio
It's about to be Scorpio season! The next four weeks will be all about you. You are shining bright right now and I know you say you hate attention, but try to embrace it this time around. After this challenging retrograde, maybe stepping out of your comfort zone is exactly what you need.

Sagittarius
There is no harm in spending money on yourself and your appearance, especially with Venus in Sagittarius right now. Just make sure to focus on your intentions. There is a fine line between acting from a place of self-celebration, and using retail therapy as a coping mechanism for some deeper things you're dealing with. Being vulnerable is necessary, especially with the coming Aries full moon and the sun entering the emotionally intense Scorpio.

Capricorn
Mercury is direct, so you can get back to work without it interfering with your progress. Take big leaps that you were stopping yourself from doing these past couple of weeks. With Mercury in your career zone and the Sun entering your social zone, it's the perfect time to network and build up your public image. You are more charming than you think, and that charm goes a long way! Be weary of burnout, though. In your free time, tap into childhood comforts and let nostalgia transport you to simpler times.

Aquarius
Jupiter, the planet of luck, is now direct in your sign! If you've ever wanted to drop all your savings on lottery tickets, now's the time! Just kidding, please do not do that. This is the ideal time to start new projects that would usually feel too risky and destined to fail. Your authenticity and individuality will shine through and bring you plenty of success. Try not to let it get to your head though, we don't want to make that individuality complex any worse.

Pisces
It is about time that you take those rose colored glasses off and acknowledge the red flags around you. You cannot give people unlimited chances, some people just aren't worth your time! You have to accept things for what they are, not for what you want them to be. With Jupiter in Aquarius and your subconscious zone, lots of healing will be coming your way. If you do have to end relationships, know that it's for the better and will ultimately lead to happiness.

Campus Safety Incident Report

In an effort to respect discretion, *The Spectator* and Campus Safety have not disclosed the idenities of the students involved in these reports.

Thurs., Oct. 14

10:36 a.m. Trouble Alarm — Alumni Gym

4:59 p.m. Area Check — On Campus

Fri., Oct. 15

8:27 a.m. Complaint — Howard Diner

8:30 p.m. Suspicious Activity — Rogers Estate

Sat., Oct. 16

1:02 p.m. Medical Emergency — South Campus

7:46 p.m. Trouble Alarm — Commons Dining Facility

Sun., Oct. 17

3:33 a.m. Motorist Assist — Stryker Lane

12:23 pm. Medical Emergency — Sadove Student Center

Mon., Oct. 18

11:08 a.m. Motor Vehicle Accident — Babbitt Circle

2:31 p.m. Medical Emergency — Taylor Science Center

5:00 p.m. Concern for Welfare — Bundy West Residence Hall

Tues., Oct. 19

9:32 a.m. Trouble Alarm — Dunham Residence Hall

9:30 p.m. Area Check — Commons Dining Facility

Wed., Oct. 20

9:14 a.m. Fire Alarm — North Residence Hall

Bachelor & Bachelorette

Claudius '22

PHOTO COURTESY OF CLAUDIUS '22

Hometown: Cairo, N.Y.
Home on Campus: Under the bed in Babbitt 10c.
Major: Econ
Turn on? Leaf.
Turn off? No more leaf.
What advertising slogan best describes your life? Home of the Whopper.
What TV genre best describes you? Action.
What's the best pick-up line you've ever used/had used on you? *slaps shell* you could fit so many leaves in this bad boy.
What's your type? Cold blooded.
What are three things you cannot live without? Leaf, water bowl, heat lamp.
If you were any social space, what would it be? Tortoises are solitary animals.
Where do you go when you want to be alone? I am always alone.
If you could join one group on campus, what would it be? Yodapez.
What's your Patronus and why? Me but bigger (my final form).
If you could break one rule at Hamilton and get away with it, which would you choose? Harem.
What would you give a thumbs up? I don't have thumbs.
What would you give a thumbs down? See above.
Who would you say is your faculty crush? Aforementioned manservant.
What would your perfect date be? Alone under heat lamp.
What is the weirdest thing currently in your room? Pile of my own excrement.
If you could remake the points system, what would be the number one offense? Trying to put fingers inside my shell.
If you were a food, which would you be and why? This question promotes poaching.
Lights on or lights off? Heat lamp.
Favorite campus study spot? I can't read.
What was your first thought this morning? I do not have thoughts.
What's the meaning of life? Like the proverbial fish who asks "what is water," I am blissfully unaware that I am alive in the first place. I simply am. Thus, I have never contemplated this question. If pressed on it, I'd probably say a good night's sleep, a relaxing day in the sun, and a shell full of dandelion leaves.
Which American historical figure are you attracted to and why? Charlotte, former White House photographer Pete Souza's pet tortoise. She won't DM me back though :(

Jane Taylor '22

PHOTO COURTESY OF JANE TAYLOR '22

Hometown: Flavortown, N.J.
Home on Campus: Glen holes (holes in the glen).
Major: Bugs.
Turn on? Deconstructing the western canon of artistic ideals calling attention to how we glorify and "other" non-western cultures as we appropriate them, yet belittle them and their validity, only propagating colonialist ideals that continue this cycle of repression.
Turn off? The slow and persistent devastation of the global south due to consumer culture and white supremacy in the global west not only do they unjustly suffer from our choices and behavior, but they also bear the brunt of the consequences before we even feel the effects due to the privileges of wealth and whiteness.
If you were a dorm which would you be and why? Abandoned glen car. Not a dorm and not answering questions.
If you had to describe yourself as the love child of any two musicians, who would you pick and why? Cupcakke and Rodriguez. Wanna know why? See my fine print.
What advertising slogan best describes your life? Finger lickin' good.
What's the best pick-up line you've ever used/had used on you? You come here often? No? Oh uh I don't know you just looked sort of familiar. No I'm not saying you're basic. No no you're super unique, I can tell. Yeah, if you wanna call me here's my number. No my number is just seven digits. Yeah I'm not dodging you.
What's your type? Sickly men, hit me with that munchausens by proxy.
If you were any social space, what would it be? Bab Pav; open for business.
Where do you go when you want to be alone? My thoughts. Siri, search hand on face wearing baseball cap emoji.
What's your Patronus and why? Y'all think of the etymology of this? No? I can tell.
If you could break one rule at Hamilton and get away with it, which would you choose? Bestiality.
Who would you say is your campus crush? Unless *Surfs Up* characters come around I have no one.
What would your perfect date be? Don't take my kidney and we'll talk.
Favorite campus study spot? That suspicious hole in the glen. No one bothers you.
What was your first thought this morning? Again?
What's the meaning of life? Absolutely f*ck shit up.

October 21, 2021

Why China's recent aggression towards Taiwan should be unsuprising

by William (Will) Rampe '24
STAFF WRITER

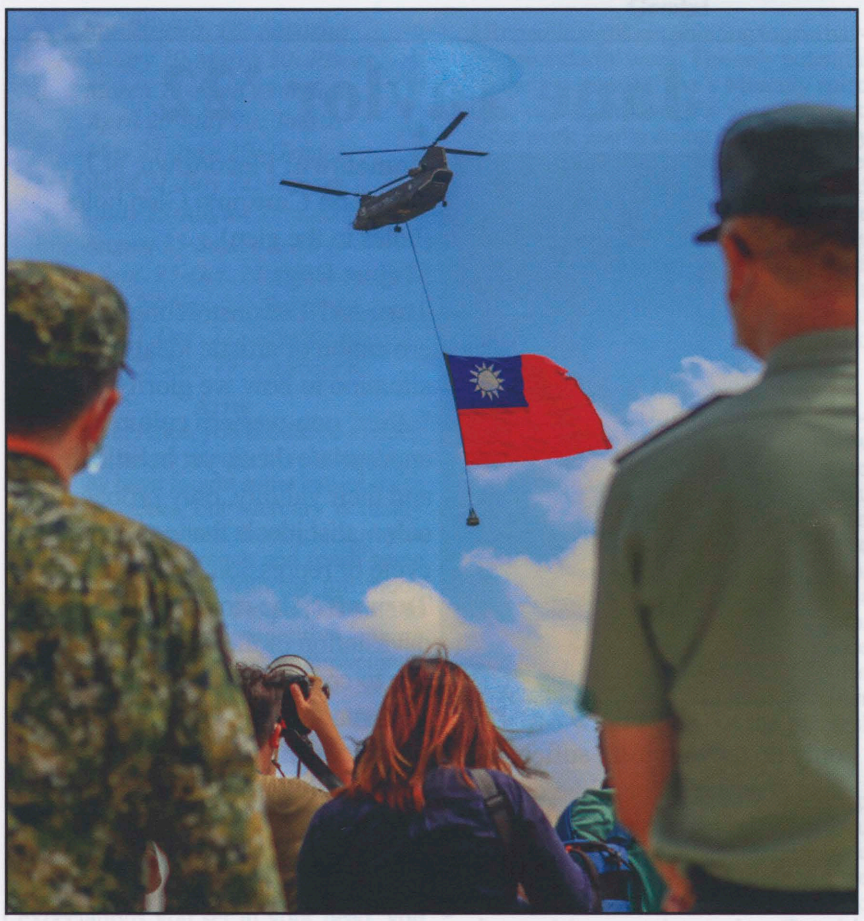

PHOTO BY NBC

Chinese warplanes flying towards Tiwan, sending a warning message.

The tense relationship between the People's Republic of China (PRC, or commonly referred to as China) and the Republic of China (ROC, or commonly referred to as Taiwan) was on display early this month when Chinese military planes invaded Taiwan's air defense identification zone (ADIZ). Taiwan responded to this threat by scrambling its air force, issuing radio warnings and deploying air defense missile systems in order to warn China against further aggression. Although the intrusions were into Taiwan's ADIZ and not its sovereign airspace (which is 12 nautical miles from its coast), China's use of bombers and J-16 fighter jets signifies an intimidating step on their part.

These intrusions by China occurred during the weekend of Chinese National Day, a holiday commemorating the founding of the PRC. This holiday was marked by nationalist sentiment by Chinese President Xi Jinping, who vowed to pursue reunification with Taiwan through peaceful means. Countering this sentiment during her nation's own National Day, Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen vowed that Taiwan would not bow to Chinese pressure. She further acknowledged this attitude when she stated that Taiwan's opposition to Chinese rule "is because the path that China has laid out offers neither a free and democratic way of life for Taiwan, nor sovereignty for our 23 million people."

There is precedence for this correlation between nationalist posturing and ADIZ violations. Chinese aircraft passed the median line of the ADIZ in July 1999 after former Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui seemingly made pro-independence remarks. Adam Ni, an analyst of Chinese military policy, explained this correlation when discussing the recent ADIZ invasions, stating that '[t]he aim of this is to assert Beijing's power and show military muscle."

Ever since the Kuomintang Party and its former leader Chiang Kai-shek fled to Taiwan after losing the Chinese Civil War to Mao Zedong and the Communists, the Chinese Communist Party-led (CCP) PRC has sought to regain absolute sovereignty in neighboring regions, including Taiwan. China has often sought this power through the use of force and the threat of potential violence to settle disputes at home and abroad. Examples of this include the response to the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and, more recently, the implementation of the national security law in Hong Kong.

In addition to these actions by the CCP, the United States (U.S.) took steps during the Cold War to legitimize the PRC. First, the U.S. entrusted the PRC with a seat on the United Nations Security Council in 1971 during the Nixon administration. During the Carter administration, the U.S. formally recognized the PRC and severed ties with Taiwan in 1979 (although the Taiwan Relations Act promoted arms sales and an unofficial diplomatic relationship between the U.S. and Taiwan).

The results of these policies have led to the present state of affairs between the U.S., China and Taiwan. Despite President Biden's suggestion that the U.S. will support the defense of Taiwan against Chinese threats and the recent U.S. nuclear-powered submarine sale to Australia (a move that China viewed as a threat), China's violations of Taiwanese ADIZ clearly demonstrates that the CCP does not take the U.S. position seriously. This should be unsurprising when looking at the U.S.'s foreign policy over the last few administrations. Whether one looks at President Obama's failure to enforce a red-line regarding chemical weapons in Syria, President Trump's dismissal of Russian interference in U.S. elections and bounties on U.S. troops, or President Biden's abysmal withdrawal from Afghanistan, U.S. foreign policy has been largely timid and inadequate in achieving its goals.

In order to be taken seriously by the CCP, the U.S. must pursue an uncompromising foreign policy with regards to China. Sanctions on CCP officials are a good first step, and I commend both the Biden and Trump administrations for implementing them over the Chinese policy in Hong Kong and the internment of Uighurs. However, sanctions are not enough to deter Chinese aggression. The U.S. must end its policy of strategic ambiguity regarding Taiwan and end all diplomatic recognition of the CCP. These steps would demonstrate to China and the rest of the world that the U.S. takes the abuses of the CCP seriously, instead of the half-hearted dismissals that are common from U.S. politicians.

While one must acknowledge that these steps would not immediately change China's internal policy, they would go a long way in discouraging China from conducting coercive foreign policy, as it would show that any aggression displayed by the CCP would be met with a proportionate counter from the U.S. This would allow U.S. allies in Asia and the Pacific to conduct their internal policies without the threat of China, due to the fact that they would have assurance of protection from the U.S., either in the form of arms sales or other supportive means. Therefore, a strong U.S. foreign policy must be pursued in order to protect Taiwan and any other democratic ally from Chinese aggression. Failure to do so will result in further interventions by China and a diminishment of global freedom and democracy.

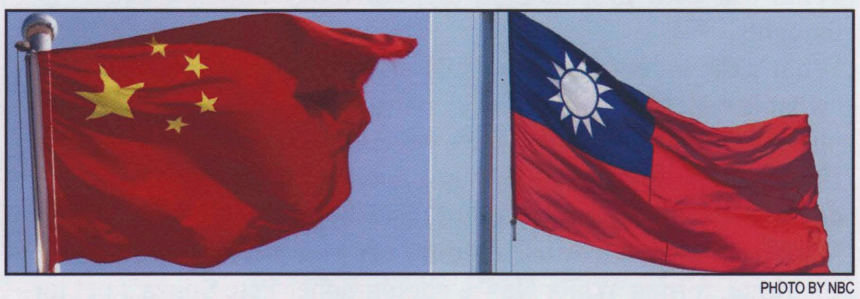

PHOTO BY NBC

(From L-R) the Chinese (PRC) and the Taiwanese (ROC) flags.

October 21, 2021

Hamilton students: get your flu shot!

by Aliana Potter '24
OPINION CONTRIBUTOR

While many of us may not be eligible for the COVID-19 booster shots yet, we are all eligible for another pandemic-preventing vaccine: the flu shot. Despite there being widespread availability, and no-cost flu vaccines, only half of eligible Americans will get the jab each year. In an effort to increase flu vaccines, Hamilton College brings nurses to campus each year to provide free flu shots to both students and staff. As we continue to battle the COVID-19 pandemic, it is vital now more than ever to receive your annual flu shot! This quick stick is free and can be squeezed in between your 10:30 a.m. class in the Science Center and your walk to Commons. It takes less than 10 minutes, but it is key to preventing a "twindemic" this winter.

A "twindemic" is a term used to describe the dreaded possibility of COVID combining with influenza and spreading rampantly amongst our population. These types of viruses tend to increase during the winter when people are forced indoors by the weather conditions, which

PHOTO BY THE CDC

Schedule your flu shot today, a reminder to mark it in your calender.

increases the risks of both COVID-19 and influenza cases rising during this time and of individuals contracting a co-infection of the two viruses. This dangerous combination has been shown to greatly increase a patient's chance of fatality, and that research was done even before the virulent Delta variant arrived. Experts worry that another mild strain of influenza could cause havoc within already strained hospitals.

Last year, public health officials pleaded with the public to get their flu shot. This plea almost doubled the rates of those vaccinated against influenza. These record numbers, paired with vigilant mask-wearing, lockdown and a weak influenza strain led to a relatively uneventful flu season. However, as we go into the 2021 flu season, vaccinated Americans have been granted permission to shed their masks. Masklessness, potentially low numbers of flu vaccines and the similarity of symptoms between COVID-19 and the flu will create the perfect storm for a COVID and flu "twindemic." Additionally, since flu numbers were so low last year, Americans are likely to have low natural immunity this year. In addition, many schools and offices are reopening this winter, which provides newfound opportunities for COVID-19 and influenza to spread indoors amongst unmasked Americans. Finally, the Delta variant, a more powerful and contagious version of COVID-19, has become the predominant strain in the United States this year. All of these factors lead to a perfect setting for a twindemic.

Just as with COVID-19 vaccines, flu vaccines do not entirely prevent the possibility of contracting influenza, but they do prevent the onset of severe illness and death. Each year, experts reconfigure the vaccine to match what they believe will be the common strain. If and when they succeed, transmission and morbidity decrease significantly.

Additionally, vulnerable populations such as elderly faculty or immunocompromised students will be safer if those around them have been vaccinated. Getting the vaccine protects those around you on campus who are more susceptible to severe illness and hospitalization.

We must do our part to continue wearing masks in crowded indoor spaces and to commit to receiving the flu vaccine this year. Experts recommend getting the flu vaccine between Sept. and Nov., but even getting it after that time period is better than not getting it at all. Hamilton students can get their flu vaccine for free at the CVS Pharmacy in Clinton, the Kinney Drugs pharmacy in Clinton, the Walgreens in New Hartford or at another upcoming on-campus vaccination site. Students can also receive a flu shot through the Hamilton College Health Center, though they will incur a charge of $30.

Many Americans, including Hamilton students, have started to loosen social distancing and masking habits. There is no better time to reverse those habits than this winter. With less opportunities to be outside, students should be masking at all times to stop the spread of both COVID-19 and influenza, because an outbreak of either could be detrimental to a small, isolated, residential community like Hamilton with limited access to healthcare resources.

By no means am I trying to suggest that we forgo socialization during the dreary winter months, but we must take the steps we can to keep our community safe, and one of the easiest ways to do so is to get your free flu shot.

PHOTO BY STREAM CAPITAL PARTNERS

The CVS in Clinton, NY, where students can recive free flu shots.

Autumn is coming: books to read to prepare for the colder days

by Katherine Kim '22 and Lily Rizzoli '24
A&E EDITORS

What better way to celebrate fall than to grab a cinnamon-flavored drink and cozy up in a corner, with nothing on your mind besides a book that demands your attention? Here are some of our fall book recommendations you can curl up with in between classes, as the leaves change colors and the weather gets colder.

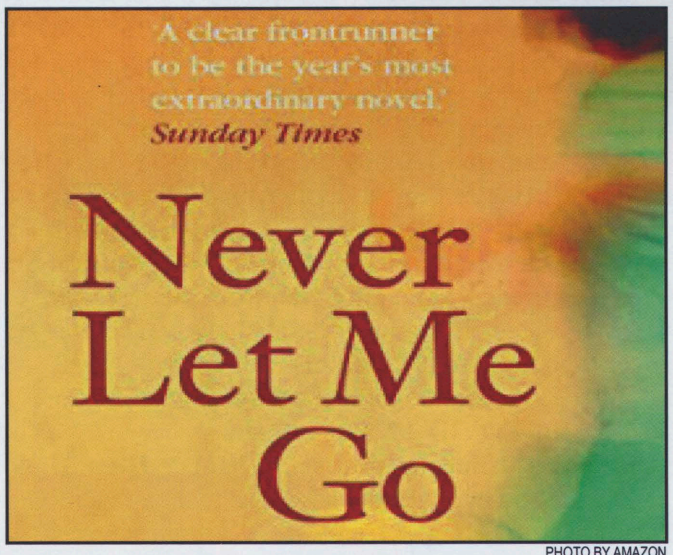

PHOTO BY AMAZON

Never Let Me Go
by Kazuo Ishiguro

This book centers around Halshaim, a seemingly picturesque boarding school in the countryside of England. Its students are classically trained and get the very best education, but are unable to leave the confines of the school grounds, knowing nothing of the world outside. For Kathy and her friends Ruth and Tommy, this unknown is too much, and until they finally learn the startling truth about Halshaim after they leave it and enter the real world.

"Let's just say that Ishiguro has a way of pitting innocence against experience while reminding us that we're capable of both." - *The New York Times*' Sarah Kerr

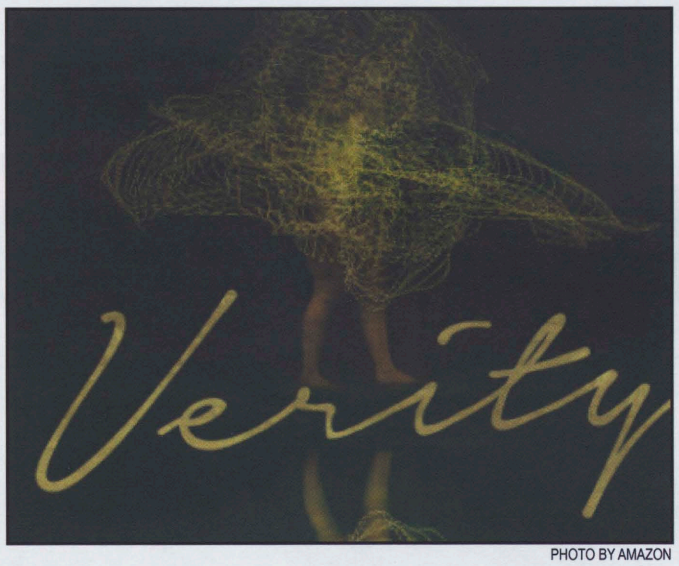

PHOTO BY AMAZON

Verity
by Colleen Hoover

If you are into thriller novels, look no further. Hoover steps away from her usual cookie-cutter romance novels (which are always great) and creates a stunning thriller in her book *Verity.* But do not worry, the romance is still strong in this one.

The story follows Lowen Ashleigh, a struggling author who is in between jobs. She is miraculously offered a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity by Jeremy Crawford—finishing famous author Verity Crawford's book series, as Verity is unable to do so herself after an awful accident. Lowen moves into the Crawford household to go through Verity's copious notes, but things quickly go awry when Lowen accidentally stumbles upon Verity's unfinished autobiography, filled with startling and horrifying admissions. Lowen decides to keep the manuscript a secret, but as she gets closer to the family and to Jeremy himself, this secret proves hard to keep.

"This isn't a book, it's a visceral experience." - B.B. Easton, best-selling author

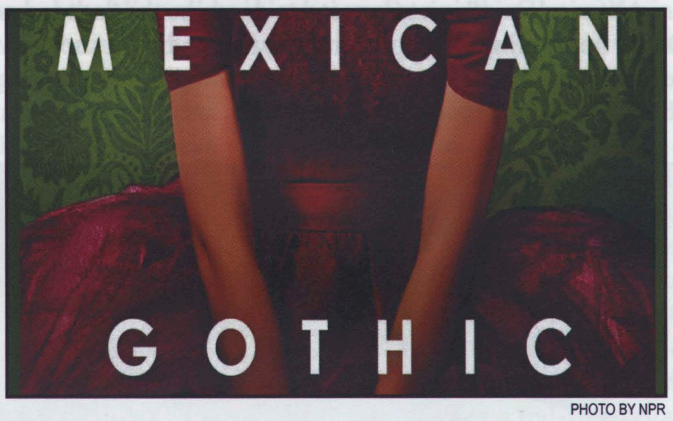

PHOTO BY NPR

Mexican Gothic
by Colleen Hoover

After Noemí Taboada receives a letter from her cousin begging Noemí to save her from a mysterious fate, she travels to High Place, the isolated house in the Mexican countryside where her cousin currently resides. When Noemí finally arrives at the grand, yet haunting house to start her search, she soon realizes that both the house and her cousin's husband intend to hide dark truths from her grasp. Yet Noemí only delves further into her sleuthing, determined to save her cousin from a violent end.

"You will be left unsettled, unsteady, and uncertain. You will also be left satisfied. And you will remember High Place, though hopefully not in your dreams." - Jessica P.Wick, writer and freelance editor of *NPR*

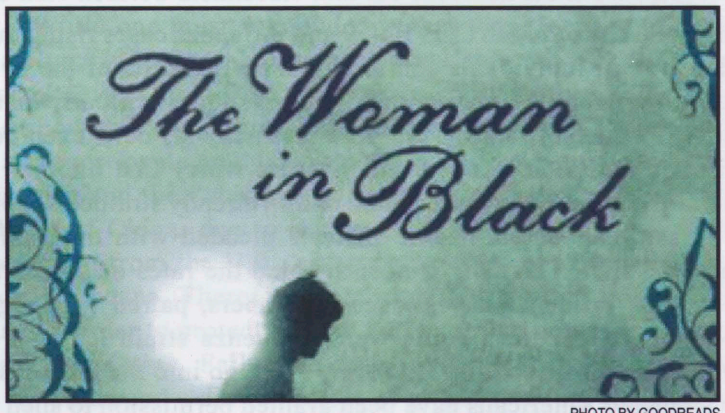

PHOTO BY GOODREADS

The Woman in Black
by Susan B. Hill

Solicitor Arthur Kipps is called to attend the funeral of a Mrs. Alice Drablow and to settle her estate in the tiny town of Crythin Gifford. However, when he arrives at the said estate—Eel Marsh House, a particularly intimidating mansion in the middle of the marshy Nine Lives Causeway—he starts noticing strange things, like screams of a horse when there is no one on the grounds, and a mysterious woman in black roaming graveyards...

"I don't believe in ghosts but [this story]...brought me about as near as I'm ever likely to get to such a belief..." - *The Daily Telegraph*

October 21, 2021

Autumn is coming: films and shows to watch on spooky nights

by Stella Karron '23
OPINION EDITOR

The temperature has dropped below 70 degrees Fahrenheit and Commons has started serving pumpkin pie: all the signs that autumn has finally arrived at Hamilton. So go take a walk in the Glen, bask in the colorful fall leaves, and grab some Cider Mill donuts, because it is time to settle in for the best movies to get you in the autumn mood. Here is your top five list of movies to watch this spooky season!

PHOTO BY MTV

5 At number five (although arguably a all year movie) is *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*. Enjoy some truly spooky magic and an awe-inducing Halloween feast to really get you in that autumn mindset. All the cloaks and cozy sweaters can act as a potential style guide as the weather gets colder.

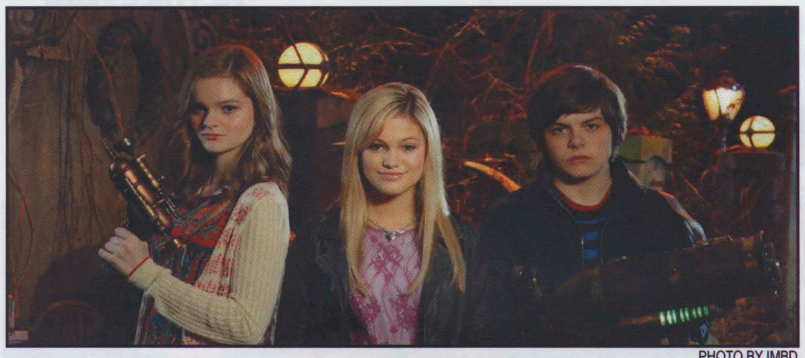

PHOTO BY IMBD

4 Coming in at number four is the one and only Halloween special *Girl vs. Monster*, starring former Disney darling Olivia Holt. This 2012 masterpiece is sure to transport you back to your parents' couch, dressed in your best trick-or-treating costume after an adventure of candy gathering. The will-they-won't-they dynamic between Olivia Holt and the dreamy Luke Benward, paired with the thrill of the film's monster adventure (not to mention a few well-timed musical numbers) is sure to fulfill all your expectations.

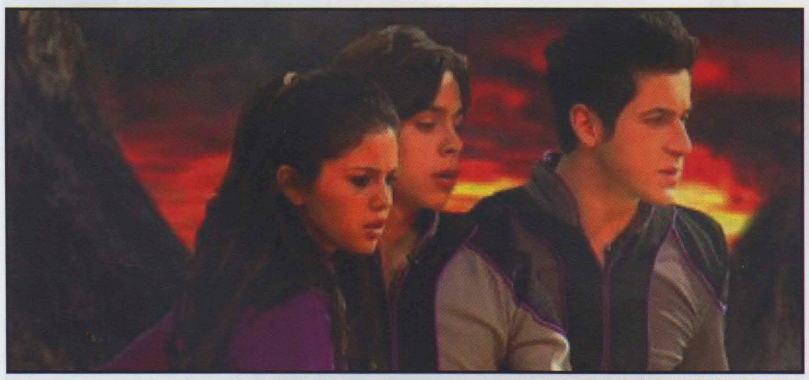

PHOTO BY COMMON SENSE MEDIA

3 Lucky number three is another nostalgic fan favorite—*Wizards of Waverly Place: The Movie*. In this Emmy-award winning children's movie, the magical and mischievous Russo siblings take on treasure hunts, spells gone wrong and sibling rivalries. If you want some humor, adventure and a little bit of magic to spice up your fall day, then take a trip down memory lane with this Disney classic.

PHOTO BY SCREEN RANT

2 With number two, we move more to our parents' favorite movies more than ours with *When Harry Met Sally.* This Meg Ryan classic follows the friendship of Harry and Sally through the years, watching them grow from enemies to begrudging friends, to gradual lovers. Although not explicitly a fall-themed film, the cozy ambiance of this 1980s romantic comedy is enough to make anyone want to light a pumpkin spice candle (obviously abiding by fire safety regulations) and watch Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal fall in love. If you have not seen this movie, listen to your parents and finally agree to watch it for their sake.

PHOTO BY INSIDER

1 At number one we have the 2019 adaptation of *Little Women.* Meryl Streep, Saoirse Ronan, Emma Watson, Florence Pugh and Timothée Chalamet all act in a beautiful story of family, loss, love and what it means to be a woman. The nineteenth century frocks and wholesome family themes make for the perfect autumn classic.

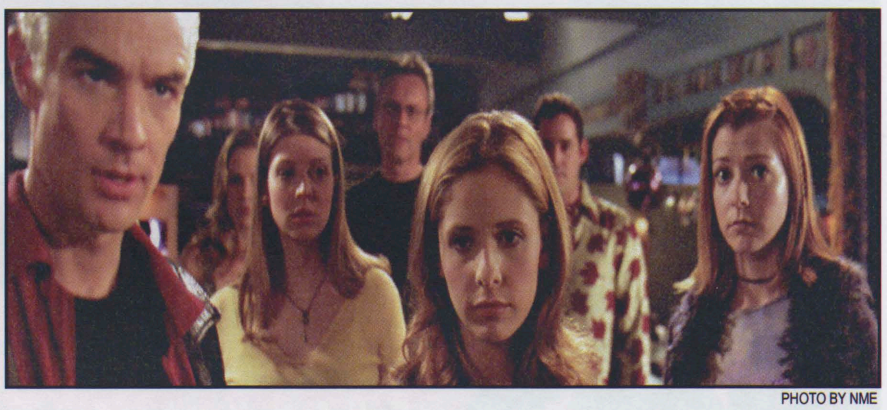

PHOTO BY NME

Honorable Mentions

Of course, this list does not include TV shows. So, if you are pressed for time and cannot commit to a whole movie, here are a few fall favorites. *Gilmore Girls* will give you that perfect small-town, New England fall vibe, along with some witty banter and good old-fashioned love triangles. If you are looking for something darker and more Halloween-themed, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is definitely a spooky show that will keep you thoroughly entertained, and also provide some proper costume inspiration as a bonus.

Enjoy these fall movies and shows, and remember to take a long walk in the Glen to see its beautiful fall foliage!

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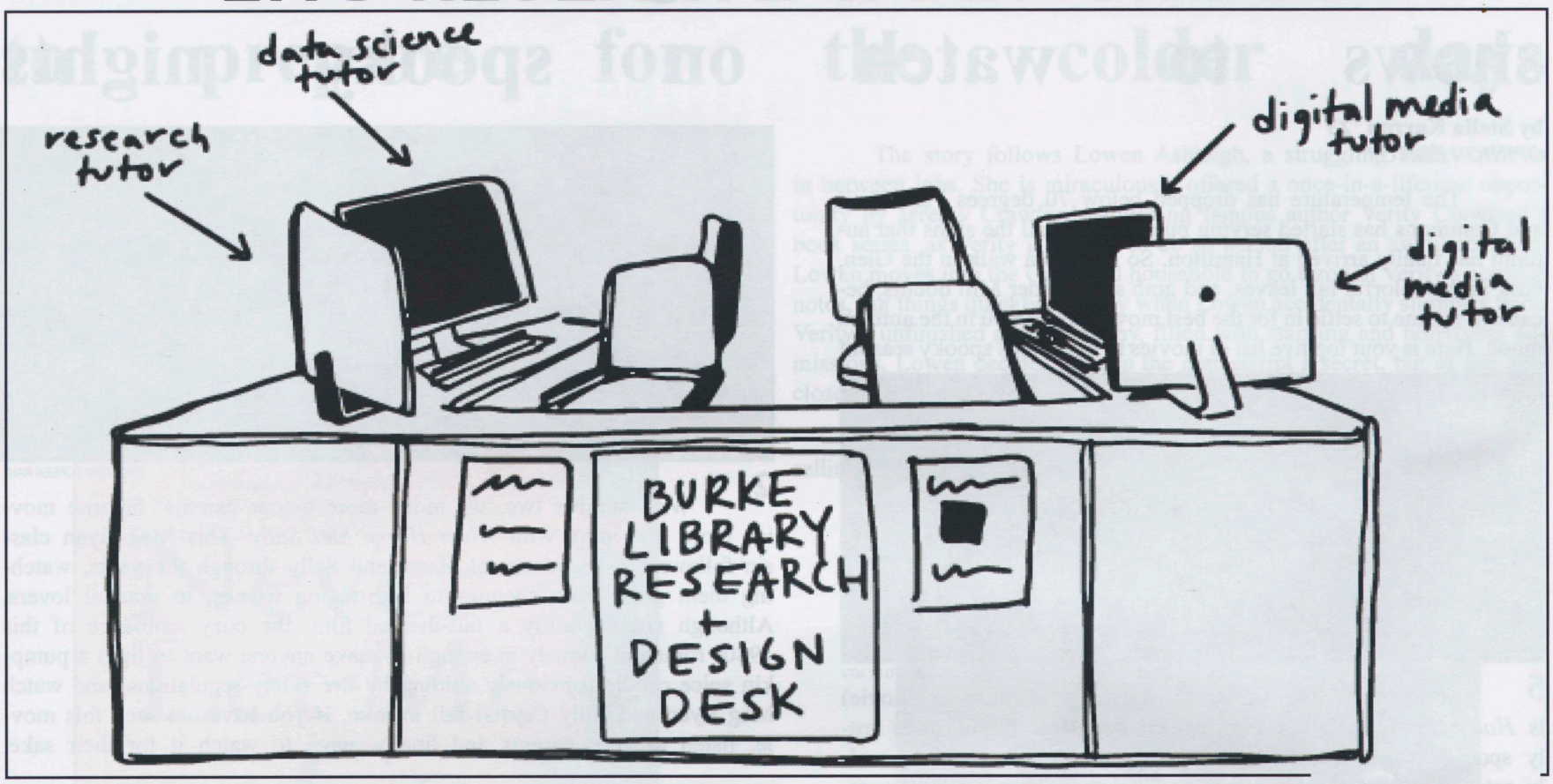

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RESEARCH - DESIGN - COLLABORATE - CREATE

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FALL FEST' 21
OFF-THE-HILL CHALLENGE!
First 200 Hamilton College students to complete the local shops Scavenger Hunt get a FREE T-SHIRT!
Fall Activities!
Student Performances!
Free Food from The Cider Mill
Scavenger Hunt!
CLINTON VILLAGE GREEN — SATURDAY 10/23/21 | 12PM-4PM

Athlete Spotlight: Betsy Overstrum '24

by Owen Lewis '24
SPORTS EDITOR

Coming off a team title at the Hamilton Invitational two weekends ago, the women's cross country team is in a good position going into the final phase of the season. To learn more about the difficult nature of running and the positive aspects that help athletes get through tough days, *The Spectator* sat down with Betsy Overstrum '24.

Cross country centers more around pain tolerance than most other sports. Do you have any methods for pain management when races get tough?

My teammates are a constant during races, smooth or rough. We arre in it together, fighting the same course and conditions, and we know how to pull and push each other through tough races. It's small words of encouragement or a tap on the hip from a teammate up ahead that keep my head in the game and remind me that I can do it — for myself and for my teammates. I also have a few mantras that I try to repeat to myself, as well as my "suck it up, buttercup" race day socks.

What is your favorite part about running competitively?

I love the atmosphere around college running. Everyone is here to compete and work hard, but we support each other (teammates and other opponents) as we do it. Running can be a lifelong sport, but to be able to compete on true cross country courses with a driven and enthusiastic team is something special.

From your own experience, do you think runner's high is real or a myth?

In my experience, runner's high is definitely real. There is nothing quite like strolling inside after a glorious long run or workout, head held high and legs comfortably tired. It is a state of euphoria that, when it hits, hits hard, and leaves a smile on my face for quite a while.

What has been the most satisfying part of the cross country season for you?

Cross country is a gritty sport. The most satisfying part of cross country is a true cross country meet where it is chilly, muddy and windy. It is the kind of moment when you huddle up with your team, put your head down, and persevere through the chaos that is a course. Aside from that, over the span of the season, I love seeing new runners succeed or achieve personal milestones. It is so much fun to be able to remind someone how awesome they are and how fast they just ran.

Injuries are really common among runners. How do you try to stay healthy?

I listen to my body as best I can, and communicate any tweaks or discomfort to our coaches so we can get ahead of them. Overtime, I have learned what my body can handle as far as training goes, and I try to push myself to a healthy extent while tapping the breaks when necessary. The keys for me are staying hydrated, stretching, rolling out and getting lots (lots!) of sleep. Cross training has always been a big help too.

What is the best race you have had so far this season?

My best race so far was definitely towards the beginning of the season. While I have not performed as well as I know I am capable, I am hoping to come running strong into the final weeks of our season and peak in line with our championship meets.

How does the team help with the demands of running?

Running is a social sport. We show up to practice every day and go off as a team to practice with no drills or scrimmages but instead the opportunity to chat and crack some jokes. Having a group of girls that can keep each other entertained is huge. What is even more important is that we help each other through workouts and races. It is not hard to tell when someone is having a tough go or rough day, and having a team that I know will help each other is incredibly comforting.

What advice would you give to a non-runner trying to get into the sport?

Give it a chance! Running has the potential to be a lifelong sport that can connect you with incredible people. Start slow and work your way up because you are more capable than you can imagine. Building mileage slowly and creating goals are great ways to keep yourself excited. A running buddy is always helpful, and they can be especially great when exploring new areas!

PHOTO BY HAMILTON COLLEGE

Betsy Overstrum '24 is looking to make a strong finish to the Fall 2021 cross country season.

A casual observer might say that running is not fun, as it lacks the ball-and-stick aspect of many other sports, leaving pain at the forefront of competitions. What are your thoughts on this point of view?

As someone who played many sports growing up and only started running competitively in my junior year of high school, that point of view makes sense. Running is special in that it is both an individual sport and a team sport. More than other sports, it has the ability to connect people and bring them to new places. Running can bring out the worst in people in terms of pain, but it brings out the best of spirit and camaraderie. If you do not think running is fun, you have not run a relaxed Lower Loop with the women's cross country team on a cool fall day.

Lightning Round

Favorite pre-race and post-race meals?

Pre-Race: scrambled eggs, toast/english muffin and berries. Post-Race: I'm pretty flexible, but it's always accompanied by a tall glass of chocolate milk.

Do you prefer long runs or interval workouts?

Long runs.

Best workout you have ever done?

Best cross country workout: Pumpkin Relays! We combine the men's and women's teams into smaller relay teams and do intervals with some Halloween spirit. Everyone walks away with a pumpkin, and whether it's the round and golden pumpkin or warty gourd, we work for it!

Athlete Spotlight: Aidan Leahey '22

by Emma Mae Regan '22
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Women's soccer continues to perform at an impressive level during the Fall 2021 semester. They recently moved from No. 16 to No. 13 on the United Soccer Coaches Women's Division III Top 25 poll. Additionally, they remain at No. 1 in the NESCAC standings and hold a 12-game win streak. One of the keys to the team's success has been Aidan Leahey '22, a senior centerback and captain whose strong and steady performance contributes immensely to the team's backline. *The Spectator* sat down with Leahey to review the team's recent achievements and look ahead to the rest of the season.

First, congratulations on the team's recent move up to No. 13 on the Top 25 poll. How have you and your team reacted to the news, and what do you attribute your team's success to?

The team and I have been absolutely thrilled to finally hit those national rankings because that's such a big deal. I think it's driven us to do better and really focus on winning the next game so we can continue to hold the No. 13 spot and potentially move up a few more spots. I think our success is due to the amount of hardwork everyone on the team is willing to put in, whether or not someone is a starter. Also, everyone is so supportive of each other, so practices are so much fun and everyone wants to work hard. There's never a moment where someone is like, "I don't want to do this anymore." Everyone is just always excited for the next game and to potentially reach the playoffs.

As a center back, what do you believe have been your personal strengths and the strengths of the defense as a whole?

As a center back, your job is to direct the back line as well as everybody else on the field, so I feel like my strength this year has been a commanding presence in the back. I think the back line as a whole has been a really strong unit. We work so well together and everybody communicates and supports each other. Our positioning has also been fantastic. I definitely think we are one of the stronger defenses in the NESCAC, and it is such an honor to play with the other three girls [on the back line].

Later this week, Women's Soccer will take on Wesleyan and Mount Saint Mary. How are you feeling about those back-to-back matchups, and what do you believe will be key to successes in both games?

I'm super excited for another back-to-back weekend. We have had two of those already. The biggest focus is definitely Wesleyan, since they are our last conference game and if we win that game, then we keep the No. 1 seed. I think the key to success there is making sure that we show up focused and ready to go, and everybody plays like we did at Trinity, as everyone was super compact, played as a unit and worked really hard. The goal for Mount Saint Mary's is to hopefully maintain an undefeated record and get other players into the game.

As a senior, what role has women's soccer played in your Hamilton experience, and what will you miss most about it post-graduation?

This team has basically been my entire college experience. When we arrive at Hamilton in Aug., we are thrown right into the season, so your friends are the team. You also have your away trips, so you are not staying on campus as much, so you get really close with your teammates. My teammates are my closest friends. I've loved every single minute that I have spent with the team, including playing soccer, team dinners and bonding nights. It has been so much fun. I think what I am going to miss most is the pre-game and post-game locker room feelings. Everyone is so excited that we won and it is such a great atmosphere.

PHOTO BY KERENZA LEAHEY

Aidan Leahey '22's strong and steady performance contributes immensely to Women's Soccer's backline.

What are you and your team's goals for the rest of the season?

Our most immediate goal is to beat Wesleyan so we can keep the No. 1 seed and host NESCACs. We are also looking to go into playoffs, where we will hopefully win the tournament, get an NCAA bid and see how far we can go.

Lightning Round

Favorite pregame meal or snack?

I don't really like to eat a lot before games because I get nervous, but I would have to say that I'm a huge fan of the Apples & Cinnamon Oatmeal by Quaker Oats. I also like coffee and a glass of orange juice. Then I'm ready to go!

Best show or movie you've watched recently?

You (Season Three) has been really good so far.

If you could play any other sport than Women's Soccer at Hamilton, what would it be and why?

Women's Hockey because I think it's similar to soccer with the speed and intensity. I also love watching hockey and I've always wanted to play, but I've never been able to because my parents put me in soccer as a kid.